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MEMORANDA RELATING TO THE COLLEGE

By PROF. ROBERT J. MORRISON*

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE COLLEGE EDIFICE BY FIRE ON THE
8TH OF FEBRUARY, 1859

About two o'clock in the morning of the 8th day of February, 1859, I was aroused from sleep by a servant boy, calling me by name at my chamber door, and crying that the college was on fire. I sprang from my bed, and saw the light streaming in through the windows of the President's House. I raised a window, looked towards the college, and saw two large volumes of flame issuing out of the second and third windows from the entry on the north side of the college edifice. It was evident that the Laboratory and the Library were in advanced conflagration. I threw on my clothes in great haste, and rushed towards the scene. Upon opening the front door of the President's House, I was struck with the terrific roar of flames, which was unusually great for such a fire. This was probably caused by the burning of the books. I had not reached the college when I met President Ewell, who had just returned from the second floor of the college, where he had been to rescue the students who were sleeping in the dormitories. All the students were fortunately saved, though several of them for a short time were in peril. Three or four of them lost their effects. I urged Mr. Ewell, who was not half-dressed to go to his chamber for warmer clothing, as the night was cold and damp, the wind blowing from the North East, but he said that I must first go with him to the basement under the Laboratory, as it was important to discover if possible the origin of the fire. I did so. From the appearance of the opening which had then burnt through the floor of the

* Robert J. Morrison was Professor of History and Political Economy and edited the second edition of the Historical Catalogue in 1859. These memoranda are taken from a mass attached in his own handwriting to a copy of the catalogue of 1859 to be found in the State Library.

Laboratory, I was convinced that the fire originated in that department. There was evidently more fire above the floor than there had been below it. I thought the hole in the floor nearer the case in which many of the chemicals were kept, than to the stove. About ten o'clock the night before a negro man had been cutting wood in the basement under the Laboratory, and he had used a candle in a wooden socket, which he said had burnt out before he left the room. Near midnight Messrs. William Taylor, and Peyton Page, students boarding with Mr. Ewell were passing the north side of the Laboratory. They stopped on this side of the Laboratory and amused themselves by counting the lighted windows of the college. They saw no sign of light in the basement. Later still Mr. Bagwell, another student, passed by the Laboratory, and he saw no sign of fire. About one o'clock Mr. Ewell went into his dining room for something to eat, and he was attracted by no light in the college.

Soon the citizens of Williamsburg flocked to the sad scene. Ladies and gentlemen were silent, sorrowful spectators of the ravages of the flames. Any attempt to stay their progress would have been vain. The records of the college were saved, and the old portraits that hung in the Blue room. The President saved college seal. The most valuable furniture of the Lecture rooms, and the Library of the Philomathean Society were also saved. Everything in the Chapel was burnt. The mural tablets crumbled under the influence of the heat.

ROBT. J. MORRISON.

The College of William and Mary
Feby 12th 1859.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT AND PROFESSORS TO LORD DUNMORE

We, his Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the President and Professors of William and Mary College, moved by an impulse of unfeigned joy cannot help congratulating your Excellency on such a series of agreeable events as the success of your enterprise against the Indians, the addition to your family by the birth of a Daughter, and your safe as well as glorious return to the Capital of this Dominion. May the great fatigues and dan-

gers, which you so readily and cheerfully undergo in the service of your Government, be ever crowned with victory! May you ever find the Public *Benefits* thence arising attended with domestick blessings! And may you always feel the enlivening pleasure of reading in the countenance around you, wherever you turn your eyes, such expressions of affection as can be deserved only from applauding & grateful hearts.

To which his Excellency was pleased to return the following answer.

Gentlemen :

I cannot but receive every instance of the attention of a learned and respectable body, such as yours, with a great degree of satisfaction ; but the affectionate and very obliging terms in which you are pleased to express your good wishes towards me, on this occasion, demand very cordial thanks, and will ever be impressed on my mind.

Dunmore

(Extract from a Supplement to the Virginia Gazette, December 8th 1774.)

FACULTY PROCEEDINGS

Extract from the Proceedings of the Faculty July 11th 1798.

“The Society having been informed that an *effigy* said to designate the President of the United States, was paraded through the streets of Williamsburg on the 4th instant by certain students of the college, and that one or more students, supposed to be different from the others, also assisted on the evening of the said day to burn another effigy said to designate the same character,

Resolved unanimously that the Society do condemn and censure the conduct of the said students as highly indecent, and as tending to bring into contempt and create an opposition to the constituted authorities of our country — J. Madison Pr”

Extract from the proceedings of the Faculty March 28th 1791 :

"The Society being informed by Mr. Bellini that the original charter of this college which is lost, was some years past seen by him in the possession of a certain — Karjavina, a native of Muscovy, who declared that it was his intention to deposit the same among the archives of St. Petersburg in Russia. Resolved &c."

July 9th 1812. "Whereupon resolved that a vote of approbation be given to the following students for their good demeanour, and attention to their studies: Lewis Tyler, W^m Brodnax, Nathaniel Miller, Lewis Rogers, W^m A. Winston, Archibald Harrison &c.

19th Dec. 1796-15th "No person other than a student, or other member of the college shall be admitted as a boarder at the college table; no liquors shall be furnished or used at table except beer, cyder, toddy, or spirits and waters, and there only in a moderate quantity —

16th The keeper of y^e college table shall on no pretense, nor for any consideration furnish or sell to the students wine or any other spirituous liquors to be drunk at any other time or place except at their ordinary meals as before mentioned."

Extract from the Proceedings of the Faculty July 7th 1813

"The Society took into consideration the general conduct of the students during the last course, and also the proficiency which they respectively manifested during the same; the public examinations having been interrupted by the occupancy of the college as Barracks for the militia."

March 9th 1814. "The Society granted permission to Jackson Morton to withdraw from college during the remainder of the course, his Guardian having given him general instruction to do so, if interrupted in his studies by the military calls."

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

“Memo: The Dial post in front of the President’s House was put down on the 15th of April 1815. J. A. S.”

Extract from a letter from the Rev: J. P. McGuire

“The name of Judge Holmes of Winchester was Hugh not David; to the list from 1790 to 1795, two names might be added, and then it would stand thus:

David Holmes U. S. Senator

Hugh Holmes Judge Court of Appeals

William McGuire, Chief Justice Miss: Ter:”

The original record of the college is in the Chapel of the Rolls, England; and the original record of the Transfer, a deed of Bargain and sale from the Visitors to the Faculty, is in one of the courts of record of Westminster Hall, London.

Robt. J. Morrison.

Extract from *Virginia Gazette* 1780

“The public are hereby informed that the vacations in the University are, from the 1st of April to the first of May, and from the first of August to the 10th of October. As the different Lectures will be continued immediately after the commencement of the term, such as are desirous of participating in the advantages which their institution now offers are requested to be punctual in their attendance. Several inhabitants of the town are willing to afford the students their board as reasonable as formerly.

William and Mary College August 1780.

The College has for sale a considerable quantity of scantling, originally intended for an additional building. Any person taking the whole which cost about five hundred pounds in 1775, may have it upon the most reasonable terms.

The Botetourt Medal

Gold, circular, one inch and seven tenths in diameter and one tenth of an inch in thickness. *Reverse.* William crowned and robed seated on his throne. Mary crowned and robed standing on his right, with her left hand upon the back of the King's chair. Rev. James Blair the first President of the college, kneeling on his right knee before the throne, in clerical dress, with ecclesiastical hat in his left hand which hangs a little in front of his body. The King extends the charter with his right hand, his left rests upon the arm of his chair. The body of the King inclines slightly towards Mr. Blair, who receives the charter with his right hand. Both hold the charter while Blair receives the King's instructions. The Legend above the figures in capital letters — "G. V. L. et MAR. TRADVNT BLARO CHART. COL." The date below the figures "ANNO REGNI QUARTO." The Obverse — The head of George the third. Legend in capital letters. "REGNANTE GEORGIO TERTIO MVSIS AMICO." Under the head in capitals also. "QVAESITVM MERITIS."

LETTER OF DR. HOUGH

Ben. J. S. Ewell

Dear Sir

Yours of the 13th ins^t to me, and to the Hon. E. W. Leavenworth are received. The whole of the papers relating to the College affairs, would make about one hundred and seventy five pages when copied, many of them are extremely personal, and evince a hatred between the parties and those who participated in the controversy which is seldom equalled. These papers are copies and were apparently submitted to the Governor of New York for his decision.

I send herewith the "statement" preserving the punctuation and orthography of the original — an abstract of the proceedings of the House of Burgesses, and a part of a letter which had begun

to be copied in compliance with your first letter. For these no charge will be made.

respectfully yours,

Franklin B. Hough, A. M. M. D.¹

From Faculty Book June 3th 1782

- I. Resolved that the Bursar be authorized to negotiate the Bills of exchange received from the French Army for the destruction of the President's House.

The Botetourt Medal

So far as the records of the College show, only eight of the Botetourt Medals were awarded. In 1772 Mr. Nathaniel Burwell and Mr. James Madison received this mark of distinction. In 1773 Mr. David Stewart of King George, and Mr. Samuel Sheild of York. In 1774, Mr. Joseph Eggleston of Amelia, and Mr. Walker Maury of Williamsburg. In 1775, Mr. John White of King William, and Mr. Thomas Evans of the Eastern Shore. The war of the Revolution doubtless prevented the further bestowal of this distinction.

NOTE.—James Madison and Samuel Sheild were competitors for the Episcopate of Virginia.

LETTER OF WYNDHAM ROBERTSON

Richmond, April 15th 1859.

My Dear Sir

Looking over the late interesting pamphlet published by the college, I noted on the scrap of paper I send you, some addenda and corrections, which possibly may not be unacceptable, and may be used as you may think proper. Especially the notices of

¹ This letter seems to refer to the mass of papers which were in the State Library at Albany, New York, relating to the College during the time of Andros and Nicholson. Some of them were copied for the Virginia Historical Society, and published in its magazine.

Professors Davis, and the Rogers who have reflected so much honor on the institution will be prized by you. They were fellow students of mine. The elder Rogers, James, was a Professor in some institution in Maryland, I think, but possibly in Pennsylvania. My notes for 1820-21 regard persons I was at college with. (I was called home before the close of my second session by a domestic affliction.) Of the other emendations, I am quite sure, except as to Tucker. I remember him very well. He was not a son of Judge Tucker. But I am *nearly* sure *was* of Geo. Tucker.

Archibald and Bolling Robertson 1795 or '96 were my eldest brothers, Powhatan 1815 was also my brother. My brother John was for a long time attorney General, as well as Judge, and a member of Congress for several sessions. I may say, because there is a misconception concerning it, that my office was as stated Governor, not Lieutenant-Governor acting as Governor. Becoming by date of election senior councillor and as such Lieutenant Governor, (March, '36), I became Governor by the resignation of Governor Tazewell, the same day. He did me the honour to postpone his resignation to that day, whereby to devolve the office on me, which, if made earlier, would have cast it on my predecessor in the office of Lieutenant Governor. I make the explanation that you may not be embarrassed by the misconception to which I have referred, and which I know, to some extent exists.

1792. John Thomson was the contemporary of John Randolph, and esteemed even more than *his* peer. He died just turned I think of 21, with a renown for talents never before or since equalled in Virginia at so early an age. * * *

Very respectfully yours, Wyndham Robertson

Notes enclosed in the foregoing letter.

1792. J. Thompson, Author of "Curtius"

1795. Archibald Robertson

" Thomas Bolling Robertson, First Rep: of Louisiana in Congress, Governor &c. U. S. Judge.

- 1803. Jos. C. Breckinridge
- 1809. W^m Old, State Senator.
- 1814. Jackson Morton, U. S. Senator, Florida.
- 1815. Powhatan Robertson, Richmond, not Petersburg.
- 1816. John Hampden Pleasants, Editor Richmond Whig.
- 1820. John A. G. Davis, Professor of Law, Uni: of Va:
- 1820. J. S. Davidson (was from) Frederick, (as were the two Magills under 1819).
 - " William Mason, (not Loudon) Brunswick.
 - " Wyndham Robertson, Gov: of Virginia.
 - " James W. Rogers, son of Prof. P. K. Rogers.
 - " Wm B. Rogers, son of P. K. Rogers, Professor W^m and Mary and University of Virginia.
- 1821. Thomas E. Burfort, son of State Treasurer Lawson Burfort, U. S. Dist: Attorney.
 - " William Cocke, Powhatan, not Richmond.
 - " Daniel G. Tucker, son of George Tucker.
 - " John J. Vanmeter, M. C. from Ohio.
- 1836. Powhatan Robertson, Petersburg, not Maryland.

Extract from a letter from H. B. Grigsby, LL. D.

"As you are anxious to make the General Catalogue of the college as accurate and as full as possible, I will communicate to you the substance of a note which I have just received from Conway Robinson, Esq., now of Washington City. He says: "In looking over the names of the chancellors of the college, I remembered a passage in the Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke by Burns. I have just referred to Vol 3, page 395. It is as follows: "On the 18th of Jany 1764 the Earl of Hardwicke had been elected chancellor of William and Mary in Virginia, but the intelligence of this did not arrive in England until after his death, of which his son and successor in the title wrote to apprise the learned body."

Norfolk April 25th 1859.

The Virginia Gazette of 29th of Nov: 1776 says:

On Thursday last the remains of our beloved and amiable fellow-citizen the Hon: Peyton Randolph Esq. were conveyed in a hearse to the College Chapel, attended by the Worshipful brotherhood of Free Masons, both Houses of Assembly, a number of other gentlemen, and the inhabitants of the city. The body was received from the hearse by six gentlemen of the House of Delegates, who conveyed it to the family vault in the Chapel, after which an excellent oration was pronounced from the pulpit by the Rev: Thomas Davis, in honor of the deceased, and recommending it to the respectable audience to immitate his virtues. The oration being ended, the body was deposited in the vault, when every spectator paid the last tribute of tears to the memory of their departed and much honoured friend. The remains were brought from Philadelphia by his nephew Edmund Randolph, in pursuance of the orders of the widow.

Extracts from the Proceedings of the Visitors*

"September 1st 1769.

Present:

The Rt: Hon: Norborne Baron de Botetourt, his majesty's Lieut. & Gov^r General of Virginia & Vice Admiral of the same, Rector:

The Hon. John Blair	Rich ^d Corbin
W ^m Nelson	W ^m Byrd
Tho ^s Nelson	John Page members
of his Majesty's Council.	

The Rev: M ^r James Maury Fontaine	
Peyton Randolph	Chas: Carter
Mann Page	Thomas Nelson Jr.
R. C. Nicholas	Carter Braxton
Geo: Wythe	John Page Jr.
Dud. Digges	Rich ^d Bland Esq ^{rs}
R ^d Randolph	
Lewis Burwell	

* The official name of the managing Board of the College was the Visitors and Governors." (Editor.)

The min^{ts} of the last meeting being read,
 The Bursar is desired to lay before the Com^t of Acct^s a state of the Coll: Revenue, down to the present time, and the com^t formerly appt^d to enquire into the state of the Coll: Buildings are desired to get some undertaker to make an exact estimate of the expence of the necessary repairs, & report the same to the next meeting, distinguishing the expence of each repair.

The visitation being informed that the Rev^d Mr. Jn^o Camm Professor of Divinity, & the Rev^d Mr. Josiah Johnson Master of the Gram^r school hav—g lately married & taken up their residence in the city of Williamsburg, by which great inconvenience has arisen to the college, & the necessary attention which those Professors ought to pay to the conduct & Behaviour of the students and scholars has been almost totally interrupted.

Resolved: That it is the opinion of this Visitation, that the Professors and Masters, their engaging in marriage & the concerns of a private family & shifting their residence to any place without the college, is contrary to the principles on which the college was founded, & their duty as Professors:

Resolved: That it is the opinion of this Visitation, that the s^d Rev: Mr. Camm, & the Rev: Mr. Josiah Johnson, their removal from the college, and taking up their residence in the city of W^msburg, is not only contrary to the Terms on which they were received into the college as Professors, but derogatory to, and an infraction of a standing ordinance of the college. But the further considⁿ of these matters is postponed to next meeting."

At a meeting of the Visitors and Governours of William and Mary College, held on the 14 Day of December 1769.

Resolved: That all Professors & Masters hereafter to be appointed be constantly resident in y^e college, and upon the marriage of such Professor or Master, that his Profess^p be imm. vacated.

The following names, initials and dates are to be found at this time upon the walls of the college. The letters and figures in brackets have been supplied from the catalogue.

T. Minge

G. Smith

G. H. J. H(ubard) 1752

N. R. 1747.

John Marshall (probably in the places (1775)

G. W. W(ythe)

R(ichard) K(ennon) 1729 (upside-down)

R. G(ist) 1759

W. Tyler (1785)

J. S(wann) (1762)

C. Tomk(ies) (1762)

N. Burwell 1771

Lee

C. M. T.

R. L(ewis)

On Brafferton W B (yrd) 1723.

Robt. J. Morrison.

Feby 28th 1860

"In the Hall of the capitol stands a maimed statue of Lord Botetourt, one of the regal Governors of Virginia, erected at public expense, in memory of his Lordship's equitable and popular administration. During the war when party rage was at its highest pitch, and everything pertaining to royalty obnoxious, the head and one arm of the statue were knocked off; it now remains quite exposed, and is more and more defaced every day." From Weld's *Travels*. Date of Preface to book 20th December, 1798.